

From: U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration <dea@govdelivery.com>
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Dateline DEA

Drug Enforcement Administration's Biweekly E-mail Informant

December 30, 2011

Top Stories from the DEA, December 17-30, 2011

DEA, Tempe Police Turn Up Heat on Sinaloa Cartel in *Operation Crank Call*

On December 20 DEA announced the culmination of *Operation Crank Call*, a 15-month long investigation of an extensive drug trafficking cell associated with the Mexico-based Sinaloa Cartel. *Crank Call* began when Tempe, Arizona police detectives arrested two individuals for engaging in an illegal drug transaction. It was determined that one of the suspects was a delivery driver for a drug trafficking organization who delivered methamphetamine to several customers in Tempe, as well as other customers across Maricopa County. When deconflicting the investigation, it was discovered that DEA in Phoenix was also conducting an investigation into the same organization, and the *Operation Crank Call* is the result. This led to local drug dealers in Tempe, Mesa, Phoenix, Chandler and Avondale, Arizona with more than 200 arrests and the seizure of nearly \$8 million, 435 pounds of methamphetamine, and 123 pounds of cocaine among other drugs to date.

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Baltimore Attorney Stanley Needleman Sentenced

On December 16 Stanley Needleman, a criminal defense attorney for more than 40 years who resided in Pikesville, Maryland was sentenced to prison and disbarred for tax evasion and for structuring financial transactions to avoid reporting large cash receipts and deposits. In addition, Needleman has been ordered to pay restitution of \$543,695 for tax losses incurred by the IRS, \$117,319 for tax losses incurred by the State of Maryland, and forfeited \$492,464 to the DEA as illegal proceeds.

According to his plea agreement and statements at the sentencing hearing, Needleman had clients, many of whom were drug traffickers, mail or deliver payments, often in cash, to the Law Office of Stanley Needleman in Baltimore. During the covert phase of the investigation, federal investigators reviewed Needleman's tax returns and bank records for the years 2005 to 2009, and concluded that the amount of legal fees Needleman collected for those cases was substantially more than what he had deposited into his bank account and reported as gross income on his tax returns. On April 14, 2011, DEA agents executed search warrants at Needleman's law office and home where \$1,153,660 in cash were found along with ledgers that chronicled the legal fees paid by hundreds of his clients.

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Six Indicted in Fresno and Madera County California Meth Ring

On December 22 it was announced that a federal grand jury returned an indictment charging six individuals with conspiring to distribute methamphetamine. An affidavit filed in the case asserts that the methamphetamine was obtained from Mexico and that the drugs and drug proceeds were then delivered and sold in Fresno and Madera Counties. As a result of the investigation, agents seized more than \$182,000, more than 40 pounds of methamphetamine, and two pounds of cocaine. If convicted, the defendants face a maximum statutory penalty of life in prison and a \$10 million fine.

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DID YOU KNOW?

DEA has 21 domestic field divisions, each with its own Special Agent-in-Charge and its own website. The largest of these offices are called Division Offices and they are in some of America's largest cities, while the smaller offices are called district, resident and post of duty offices which stretch from Fairbanks and Anchorage in Alaska in the north to the southern cities on the Mexican border and even in Key West, Florida. To visit the 21 division homepages or to contact any of DEA's offices around the United States, click [here](#).

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM DEA!

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